



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Charmaine Doran, Director
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POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

The Office of Council Services (OCS) was created on March 19, 1973 by enactment of Ordinance 4116 (Article 3, Chapter 4, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu). It is charged with providing comprehensive research and reference services for the council, conducting research for the enactment or consideration of legislation, and serving in an advisory or consultative capacity to the council and its committees. Since 1993, OCS has also served as revisor of ordinances.

The 1973 Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu ("RCH") authorized the council to establish OCS to assist it in the exercise of its legislative power (Sec. 3-107.7 RCH). OCS is viewed as "a necessary adjunct to, and is supportive of, the policy formulation or legislative role of the city council" and "a tool for decision making -- to assist it in analyzing the city's policies and financial programs for their effectiveness and adequacy, and in identifying alternative programs, policies, and major problems which endanger the public interest and welfare."¹

SERVICES PERFORMED

OCS services performs the following services:

- Conducts independent research necessary for the enactment of legislation upon the request of the council;
- Provides assistance to the council's standing committees by conducting background research, gathering pertinent data, and serving as resource persons to the committees;
- Analyzes executive branch proposals, programs, bills, and reports at the request of the council;
- Provides legal research and advice at the request of the council;
- Prepares bills and resolutions requested by councilmembers;
- Analyzes, prepares amendments for, and monitors the execution of the city's operating and capital budgets;
- Provides information to individual councilmembers by letter, memorandum, personal or telephone conferences, or electronic communication;
- Provides liaison service to the council regarding the City's information technology systems, including geographic information system (GIS);
- Serves as revisor of ordinances, and supervises the revision, codification, and printing of the revised ordinances, and maintains the city's webpage and computerized databases for the revised ordinances and city policy resolutions;
- Assists the council in fulfilling its responsibilities as a member of the Hawaii State Association of Counties;
- Assists the councilmembers in their performance as trustees of Kapiolani Park;
- Assists the council by providing clerical support for its advisory bodies, including the Agricultural Development Task Force; the Clean Water and Natural Lands Commission; and the Sustainable Planning, Design, and Construction Practices Task Force.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2011

With a staff of 18 -- a director, an assistant director, five attorneys, six analysts, one paralegal, and four support staff -- the Office of Council Services accomplished the following in fiscal year 2011.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

As the research arm of the council, OCS prepared approximately 778 written responses to requests for service in fiscal year 2011. These responses included 232 bills, 388 resolutions, and 158 letters, legal memoranda, and statistical and research reports. OCS also provided research and staff assistance to the council's standing committees and legal staff services for the executive sessions of the council's committee on executive matters and legal affairs. In these executive sessions, councilmembers considered matters permitted by Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to be discussed in meetings closed to the public and discussed claims against the City where the premature disclosure of information would adversely affect the interests of the City and the public. In March 2011, OCS released its ninth annual "Issue Profile, Status of the City's Finances" report. The report is intended to provide the council with a historical and comparative context to review the upcoming city budget and fiscal trends.

¹1971-72 Charter Commission.

OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

With the election of new members in the 2010 general election, OCS helped to staff the inauguration ceremony and conducted an orientation for new members.

In FY 2011, the webpages for the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu and for city policy resolutions were overhauled.

For more than a decade, OCS has provided the only volunteer reviewers in the State of Hawaii for the nationwide Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) distinguished budget presentation awards program. The reviews are based on how well an applicant local government's annual budget documents meet GFOA criteria relating to the budget as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device. During FY 2011, one analyst served as a GFOA budget reviewer. The budgets reviewed in the fiscal year included those of the following jurisdictions and entities:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Howard County, Maryland

City of San Juan Capistrano, California

City of Wichita, Kansas